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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, May 2, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Of all the diet questions coming up in the mailbag each week, the largest number come from people interested in diets to cut down weight. And no wonder. No wonder people have a hard time sifting the facts from all the rumors, superstitions, fads and frauds that have grown up around this business of "reducing."

So here are some typical questions asked by people who are overweight-- questions that come up in the mailbag again and again.

First question: "If I cut down in the amount of water I drink, will this help cut down my weight? I have heard that drinking water is fattening."

Answer: Water cannot possibly build fat in the body. If you drink a quart of water all at once and then step on the scales, your weight may be 2 pounds more because a quart of water weighs 2 pounds. But this is not permanent weight. The body discards water it does not use. Drinking plenty of water is one way to keep yourself in good health. You need lots of water. Human bodies are over 60 percent water. And you need to be careful about your health particularly when you are on a reducing diet. Since water cannot form fat, you can drink as much as you like. Physicians often suggest that you fill up on water when you have the "empty feeling" which often goes along with a reducing diet.

Second question: "Is milk fattening?"

Answer: Cream is a fat, so can build fat in the body, but milk, skim milk or buttermilk or cottage cheese should be the foundation of any safe and successful reducing diet. Milk is one of the protective foods that you need to keep you in good condition, especially when you are getting along on a limited menu.



Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics offers this advice to overweight people. She says: "Count heavily on milk, fruits, vegetables, lean meat, lean fish, and eggs; cut down on cream, butter, fat meat, sauces and salad dressings; cut out pastries, sweet desserts, rich cakes, cookies and candy."

In other words, base your diet on the protective foods like milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables and meat. These are the foods that furnish you with minerals, vitamins, protein and bulk--the non-fattening nutrients. The foods that furnish a good deal of sugar, starch or fat are the fattening foods.

Question No. 3: "Is it true that honey is not fattening? I have been told that honey is one kind of sweet that you can eat all you want of without gaining weight."

Answer: Honey is a good wholesome sweet. But it is a sugar, just the same. And any kind of sugar can add weight if it is adding extra surplus calories.

Fourth question: "Are breads and crackers made of rye instead of wheat flour reducing foods?"

Answer: There is no such thing as a "reducing food," if by that term you mean a food that has power to take off weight--that has specific reducing properties. Some foods do not add weight and some foods do add weight. But no food takes off weight. All cereal foods contain carbohydrates--starches and sugars, so can rightly be classed among the foods that add fat. Certain cereal foods are less "fattening" than others, but none are actually "reducing."

Here is a question about fruit juice: "Will you tell me whether there is any particular fruit juice that will take off weight--is a reducing food?"

Answer: Again there is no such thing as a food that takes off weight or "reduces." Fruit juices, because they are so largely water and also because they contain minerals and vitamins, may very well fit into a low-caloric diet. They are very wholesome foods and belong in any well-balanced daily menu. If no sugar is added to them, they are not very fattening. But claims or statements are wrong if



they hold that any kind of fruit juice will in itself cut down your weight.

As you might expect, that good but often misunderstood food, the potato, comes in for its share of questions. Here's a sample: "Please tell me whether potatoes are the most fattening of all foods?"

Answer: No. Potatoes are high in starch, as vegetables go, but they also contain a good deal of water and some very valuable minerals and vitamins. Concentrated sugar, as in many candies, or a combination of sugar and fat and flour, as in some cookies or cakes will add more pounds to your figure than the much maligned potato.

The last question comes from a questioner who says she has dieted and dieted and just can't lose. She wants to know why. And that's hard to answer. Overweight comes from 2 causes: One is overeating and lack of exercise. The other is some abnormal condition of the glands or the digestive system. If your weight is the result of some abnormal condition, then your physician is the one to advise you about reducing. But if you are one of the people who has superfluous pounds from overeating and lack of exercise, the remedy for you is to eat less of the fattening foods and exercise more. By the right diet and exercise you can take off weight simply and safely. The safest way to cut down weight is to be slow and steady about it. Get a good sane diet founded on the protective foods and stick to it for months and months, if necessary. Remember, too, that a few slips in diet may undo all the good you've done by dieting. For example, if you eat just a piece or two of candy a day, or 5 teaspoons of sugar, or one extra tablespoon of fat above your daily calorie needs, you can easily gain 10 pounds a year.

That's all the questions for today. More next Tuesday.

